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Tax Free Week Is Back!



All clothing and footwear costing less than \$300 will now be exempt during "Sales

Tax Free Week" which will be from **Sunday August 15th through Saturday August 21st**. Plan your shopping accordingly!

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER EMIL "BUDDY" ALTOBELLO



82nd District ~ Meriden

Legislative Office Building, Room 4015
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Getting Results For You

Capitol: 860-240-8585
toll-free: 1-800-842-8267
www.cga.state.ct.us/hdo

Questions? Concerns? Call Infoline



Infoline is a great resource for information about community services. It provides referrals to human services and crisis intervention. It is toll-free from anywhere in Connecticut by dialing 2-1-1 and operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER EMIL "BUDDY" ALTOBELLO

Capitol News 2004



82ND DISTRICT



Dear Friends,

The 2004 legislative session was filled with many challenges as the General Assembly worked hard to pass a fair budget for our state. I am pleased to report that the session also produced new laws designed to improve health care, protect our children, assist working families, and strengthen the economy.

The intent of this newsletter is to update you on significant state issues and provide summaries on several key initiatives that were passed this year. I am confident these accomplishments will improve our overall quality of life and ensure the future economic growth and stability of our communities.

As always, it is an extreme honor and privilege to serve you as your State Representative. I will continue my efforts to get results for you in the future.

Sincerely,

Buddy

A Fair and Balanced Budget

The state has finally emerged from a deficit and fiscal year 2004 brought a surplus of over \$200 million. The 2005 budget that we passed is a **budget trifecta, meaning that it is balanced, under the state spending cap, and does not impose new taxes on our citizens**. It is fiscally responsible while addressing the critical needs important to the people of Connecticut: education, health care and aid to cities and towns. With Connecticut slowly recovering from past economic hardships, we were able to fund programs and services previously cut due to our state's billion dollar deficit. The fiscal year 2005 budget:

- Imposes NO new taxes
- Is \$136.3 million below the statutory spending cap
- Raises the property tax credit from \$350 to \$500 for tax year 2005
- Eliminates co-pays and premiums for HUSKY health and Medicaid
- Funds HUSKY health adult program

More Budget Highlights ...

- ◆ Provides additional funding of over \$92 million in grants to towns for Fiscal Year 2005.
- ◆ \$25.3 million for the Higher Education State Matching Grant program, which provides \$1 in state funds for every \$2 in private funds raised by the constituent units of higher education.
- ◆ \$3.4 million to add more State Troopers.
- ◆ Eliminates the governor's authority to make up to \$55 million in recisions.
- ◆ Increases funding for School Readiness programs.
- ◆ Provides \$1.56 billion in local education funding.
- ◆ Adds \$4.6 million to reduce the DMR waiting list.

Preserving Our Environment

Air pollution is a cause of major health problems. In fact, 75,000 children and 202,000 adults suffer from asthma in Connecticut due to poor air quality. I co-sponsored legislation that will significantly improve our air quality and the health of citizens. Connecticut has adopted California's stringent emission standards with the passage of the "Clean Cars Bill." Toxic emissions from cars, SUVs and light trucks will be reduced beginning with model year 2008.



Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released by fossil fuel consumption, deforestation, and other human activities can trap heat in our atmosphere for 100 years with devastating environmental consequences. To address this, we passed legislation that will reduce harmful greenhouse gas to year 1990 levels by January 1, 2010 and 10% below 1990 levels by 2020. Stricter greenhouse gas emissions will help control global warming while stimulating the development and use of energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy.



Honoring Our Veterans

A new law increases the number of veterans eligible for burial in the state veteran's cemetery in Middletown and admission to the state Veterans' Home and Hospital which has been changed to the **Veterans' Home**. It does so by eliminating war service as a criterion for burial or admission, **making any veteran honorably discharged from active service in the U.S. Armed Forces eligible.**



Reducing Prison Costs

To reduce prison overcrowding and realize cost savings in the Department of Corrections, the General Assembly overwhelmingly passed meaningful prison reform. This legislation emphasizes moving offenders from prison into halfway houses and community-based treatment programs. **Sixteen million dollars have been shifted to hire more probation and parole officers to supervise released offenders, and to expand halfway houses and provide more services, including drug treatment programs.** The legislation also offers inmates more opportunities to get a parole hearing; nonviolent offenders will be given a parole hearing if they have not been released by the time they serve 75% of their sentence.

Protecting Our Children

A new law enhances penalties for offenses involving child pornography and using the Internet to entice minors to engage in sexual activity.

- ◆ Updates the definition of "child pornography."
- ◆ Creates offense levels and penalties based on the amount of child pornography possessed.
- ◆ Bars those charged with these offenses from the pretrial Accelerated Rehabilitation program.
- ◆ Requires sentences to include between 10 and 35 years of probation.
- ◆ Requires a 10-year sex offender registration and submission of DNA samples for people convicted of enticement and the newly created child pornography possession offenses.
- ◆ Denies computer access to incarcerated offenders convicted of crimes requiring sex offender registration.